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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000265

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [IV](#)
SUBJECT: FORCES NOUVELLES WARNS OPA IN JEOPARDY IF NO
ELECTIONS IN 2009

REF: A. ABIDJAN 246
[1](#)B. ABIDJAN 244

Classified By: PolEcon Chief Silvia Eiriz for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary. The FN leadership met on April 20 and issued a declaration that said elections are technically possible and must take place in 2009. The FN reserved the right to reconsider their participation in the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) after 2009. They expressed their confidence in Prime Minister Soro and accused President Gbagbo's FPI party of stalling the peace process. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Forces Nouvelles (FN) Political Directorate, Chief of Staff, and top military commanders met on April 20 in Bouake to examine the country's socio-political situation. A statement issued after the meeting said they would meet on a monthly basis to evaluate progress on the peace process. Prime Minister Soro did not attend the meeting, but was represented by Minister of Justice Mamadou Kone and Minister of African Integration Amadou Kone, who previously served as FN Cabinet Director. This meeting followed the April 14 meeting of the FN delegates, which produced a communique urging the Prime Minister to resign (See Reftel B).

FN Leadership Expresses Confidence in Soro

[1](#)3. (U) The FN declaration accused President Gbagbo's FPI political party of launching unjustified attacks against Prime Minister Soro and adopting recalcitrant positions each time implementation of the OPA reaches a decisive stage. Regarding their delegates' earlier call for the Prime Minister's resignation, the FN leadership expressed its confidence in Soro and deferred to him regarding whether or not he should resign.

Military Issues Pending

[1](#)4. (U) The declaration stated the FN will only engage in the peace process as set out in the OPA and especially regarding military and disarmament issues that have been resolved by the fourth supplementary agreement to the OPA (Ouaga IV). The declaration noted that dismantlement of the militias has not yet taken place and that the directive regarding creation of the new army has not been issued. The declaration also noted that President Gbagbo has not yet signed the decrees provided for in Ouaga IV: one recognizing the rank of general for FN Chief of Staff Bakayoko and PM Military Cabinet Chief Michel Gueu and one regarding creation of the commission to examine ranks for FN troops that belonged to the national army before they rebelled.

Elections in 2009

[1](#)5. (U) The FN said they believe elections are technically possible in 2009 since only two percent of voter registration

centers have not yet become operational, but will become so. They added that elections must take place in 2009 so the country can end the current state of "no war no peace" that continuously impoverishes its citizens. They welcomed the transmittal by Prime Minister Soro to President Gbagbo of a decree convoking the electoral college. The FN reserved the right to reconsider their participation in the ongoing peace process after 2009.

International Community

¶16. (U) The FN thanked the donor community for the support given to the Ivoirian government for rehabilitation of its government buildings. (Comment. The donor community has provided funding to refurbish courthouses, prisons, etc. End Comment.) The FN called on the UN Sanctions Committee to take action without providing any further details on what kind of action they are seeking.

¶17. (C) Comment. The FN are going on the offensive with the message that it is the FPI and not the FN which bears the blame for repeated delays in OPA implementation. There is a prevailing belief amongst Ivoirians, however, that individuals in the camps of both the President and the Prime Minister derive personal profit from maintaining the status quo. Their new verbal offensive is undoubtedly meant, in part, to demonstrate to the public and the international community that they are not the obstacle to elections this year. They may also be exerting pressure on Soro to prevent him from being drawn in too close to Gbagbo (See Reftel A). It is not yet clear that the FN would really pull out of the

ABIDJAN 00000265 002 OF 002

OPA if elections are not held in 2009. However, the mere threat strengthens Soro's bargaining position with Gbagbo and could also strengthen FPI moderates who supported Gbagbo's decision to enter into the direct dialogue with the FN.
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